

SUBJECTS.

18. The need for better encouragement being given for the education of the Mahomedans.

Mr. M. Kunju Khailir Pillai (Member, Nominated) said that the present educational condition of the Mahomedans was far from satisfactory. The majority of them were completely ignorant and uneducated. They showed a natural dislike for education. It was true that Primary education was completely free and a large number of Primary Schools was scattered throughout the State, making this education within the reach of all. The Mahomedans were also in the enjoyment of special half-fee concessions in all the schools of the State. With all those advantages and special concessions; however, the Mahomedans would not go to school. The reason for the peculiar indifference had to be traced to their orthodoxy and their strict adherence to custom. The Mahomedans were directed by the Koran to study religious principles before anything else. The people who gave instruction to the Mahomedan boys in religion were mostly uneducated people. A period of not less than five years was spent on it. By that time the boy would have grown too old to enter a school and he was afterwards left adrift. It was therefore necessary that means should be adopted to impart secular and religious education in the same schools. It was such schools that were wanted for the education of the Mahomedans, and without them their children had not the hope of getting themselves educated in the near future. In regard to the possible question whether the Mahomedans themselves could not start such schools where they were needed, the Member said that the project of starting a Mahomedan High School in Alwaye had fully convinced him of the impracticability of such an idea. The community were not united in such matters. They would not understand the benefits of co-operation. He therefore requested that the Government might be pleased to start separate schools for Mahomedan children in places where they lived in large numbers, and religious and secular education imparted in them side by side. There were separate schools for the Mahomedans even now in some places such as Alleppey, Kottar, Trivandrum, Alur and Changanacherry. But under 'religious education' only Hindustani was being taught in them. The Mahomedans were enjoined to learn Arabic and that language should be taught in the schools proposed by him.

In addition, he suggested that, if Primary education be made *compulsory* throughout the State, the advantages that would accrue thereby were greater to the Mahomedans than to the other communities. Other Native States like Baroda had already made Primary education compulsory and it should not be difficult for the Government to declare it compulsory here also. If there be any difficulty to make it compulsory throughout the State immediately, he requested that it be declared so at least in so far as the Mahomedan community was concerned.

Lastly, the Member dwelt upon the education of Mahomedan girls. He said that uneducated mothers could not be expected to bring up intelligent sons. But the deep-rooted custom and the orthodoxy of the Mahomedans precluded them from sending their girls to the public schools. There was no other go to educate them. He therefore requested that separate Elementary Mixed Schools should be provided for them, where they could obtain both religious and secular education.

SUBJECTS.

Mr. Shaik Mahomed Hamidani Thangal (Member, Nominated) said that the chief difficulty for the education of the Mahomedan boys was that they had first to study their religious principles, and for that, they had to become familiar with the Arabic language. Their religious injunction was that they should study the Arabic language from the mother's lap to the grave. That the Mahomedans were very backward in education admitted of no dispute. It was therefore necessary that the Government themselves should take the initiative in ameliorating their condition. To achieve that object, he requested action being taken in the following directions :—

(1) Special schools for the education of Mahomedan boys and girls should be freely started in all Mahomedan centres and secular and religious education imparted in them.

(2) Primary education should be made *compulsory* at least so far as the Mahomedan community was concerned.

(3) Four scholarships should be awarded annually to intelligent young men from the community, to enable them to prosecute their studies up to the B. A. Degree at Trivandrum.

(4) A teacher proficient in Arabic should be employed in each school to teach the Mahomedan boys.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

119. School fee concessions to the coast Christian boys.

Mr. L. H. Netto (Member, Nominated) thanked the Government for the grant of educational facilities for the children of the coast Christians. He said that the Mahomedans and the Pulayas had been granted the privilege of half-fee concessions to their boys in all the Government schools. The coast Christians were really more backward than the Mahomedans in the matter of their education and general prosperity. In their G. O. No. 2447/E., dated 9th December 1910, the Government also admitted them to be backward in point of education. He therefore requested that the half-fee concession might be extended to the coast Christian boys also in the Secondary Schools. The cost to the Government would be very small as there were at present only very few boys under instruction. It would at the same time impart an impetus to education and afford a moral support to the strenuous endeavours of a depressed community to ameliorate their condition.

Dewan.—The real difficulty appears to be to differentiate the coast Christians from other Christians and put them into a compartment, which will have to be done if a concession is to be granted to them.

Member.—In every coast Christian village, there will be a chapel or church attached to it, and among the church records will be found a church register generally 30 and 40 years old. Every boy applying for a concession may be asked to produce an extract from the birth register to prove that he is a coast Christian and the same may be caused to be countersigned by the Assistant Inspector of Schools. There can therefore be no difficulty in limiting the concession to the real coast Christian boys.